

That problem of SHRINKAGE

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What Residual Shrinkage Means in Fit



SHIRT, SIZE 15

RESIDUAL SHRINKAGE	1%	3%	5%
COLLAR	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{3}{4}$ "
CHEST	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	1"	2 $\frac{3}{10}$ "
SLEEVE	$\frac{1}{8}$ "	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	1"

A 1% shrinkage in a shirt is hardly noticeable, but 3 and 5% shrinkages produce an unserviceable article



DRESS, SIZE 16

RESIDUAL SHRINKAGE	1%	3%	5%
LENGTH	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
BUST	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	2"
WAIST	$\frac{3}{10}$ "	$\frac{7}{8}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
HIPS	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	2"

Note that 5% shrinkage changes size-16 dress to size 12, and bust, waist, and hip measurements to size 14

Recently 1,700 members of one of Good Housekeeping's Consumer Panels reported on their experiences with textiles and clothing. More than 40% found excessive shrinkage in as many as 1 out of 4 dresses bought last year. Yet nearly all said they had asked for preshrunk fabrics. Perhaps that was their mistake.

Merely asking for preshrunk fabrics isn't the way to avoid excessive shrinkage. You must look for tags or labels telling you that the fabric in a garment has a low percentage of residual shrinkage. By itself the term "preshrunk" is meaningless—in fact, it is no longer a fair practice for manufacturers and stores to use it in making shrinkage claims unless the percentage of residual shrinkage also is stated definitely.

WHAT IS RESIDUAL SHRINKAGE? Residual shrinkage is the amount of shrinkage to be expected after a fabric is laundered or dry-cleaned repeatedly. It is expressed in percentages—1%, 2%, 3%, and so on. It refers only to the shrinkage of the fabric in the garment. The above chart shows how residual shrinkages of 1%, 3%, and 5% change the measurements of a dress and a man's shirt. It will help you visualize changes in size in terms of actual measurements.

Generally speaking, 1% residual shrinkage means that a dress will fit as satisfactorily after repeated dry-

cleanings or launderings as when you first tried it on; so you can buy it without a qualm. But with 2 or 3% residual shrinkage it may be a good idea to consider a size larger. A 3% residual shrinkage will shorten a size-16 dress 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and reduce its hip measurement 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Other sizes are changed proportionately; the larger the dress, the greater the change. ~~Dresses with more than 3% residual shrinkage should be passed up, as we find in our investigations that they become too snug after repeated washings if they originally had anything like good fit.~~

In a man's shirt, 1% residual shrinkage means good fit throughout its life. Two or 3% residual shrinkage will make a shirt a poor investment in comfort and looks. For example, the all-important collar measurement of a size-15 shirt would become almost a size 14 $\frac{1}{2}$. On the other hand, 3% residual shrinkage would not be serious in a sports shirt or other loose-fitting garments if they originally fitted comfortably.

Residual shrinkage is one of the service qualities we determine about all washable or dry-cleanable fabrics investigated in the Institute's textile laboratory. Not only clothes, but curtains, slipcovers, and other articles must meet our shrinkage requirements before they are considered acceptable. Our Facts-First Fashion Tag (see page 47) includes residual shrinkage.